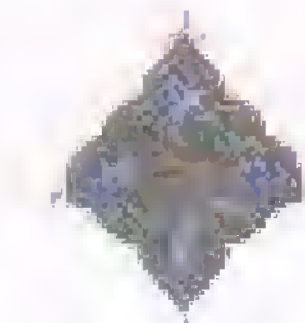


***The Life of The
Last Prophet***



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Introduction

'WE HAVE SENT YOU (O MUHAMMAD)
ONLY AS A MERCY FOR ALL THE WORLDS.'

QUR'AN: THE PROPHETS (21):107

THE BIRTH of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be upon him, and the dawn of his prophethood was not the birth of a Prophet alone, nor was it the rise of a new nation, nor yet the beginning of a new era. It was the genesis of a new world which was destined to last till the end of time when all shall be returned to their Lord and Master. The influence of Muhammad's prophethood is visible in everything that the world now contains, the beliefs and patterns of thought, culture and civilization, morals and modes of living, knowledge and learning. In short, all spheres of human endeavour.¹

Strange indeed, therefore, that so many people on the face of the earth today have little or no knowledge of the life and mission of this last great Prophet of God

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and his historical impact on the world we live in. It is for this reason that it was decided in all humility to try and compile a brief account of the major highlights of his biography for the general public.

Endless are the words which have been spoken to describe his noble life and personality, but the aim of this presentation is to keep the story as authentic and simple as possible. It is intended as an introduction for those perhaps approaching the subject of the Prophet for the first time. I believe no one can fail to be moved or inspired by the magnificence of his radiant character: even Muhammad's greatest enemies had to admit that no fault could be found in his behaviour or integrity. In addition, those Western scholars and historical figures who over the centuries were brave enough to gaze with an honest heart at the miracle of Muhammad's life and achievements, have testified to this. Some of their observations are remarkable. For example, George Bernard Shaw said:

*"I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving the problems in a way that would bring the much needed peace and happiness. Europe is beginning to be enamoured of the creed of Muhammad. In the next century it may go further in recognizing the utility of that creed in solving its problems."*²

Lamartine in his lengthy tribute to the Prophet wrote:

Introduction

*"If greatness of purpose, smallness of means and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could claim to compare any great man in modern history with Muhammad?"*³

Perhaps most telling of all, Gandhi wrote the following about the Prophet of Islam:

*"I become more than ever convinced that it was not the sword that won a place for Islam in those days. It was the rigid simplicity, the utter self-effacement of the Prophet, the scrupulous regard for pledges, his intense devotion to his friends and followers and his intrepidity, his fearlessness, his absolute trust in God and in his own mission. These and not the sword carried everything before them and surmounted every obstacle."*⁴

This very concise account of 'The Life of the Last Prophet' can in no way take the place of those precious volumes – the product of many years of devoted research – which a great constellation of scholars and historians, such as Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, have contributed to the understanding and study of the subject; nor does it attempt to. My only hope is simply that it will be able to kindle a spark of light and understanding and inspire the seeker of truth to proceed further along the Way of Guidance that leads to God and earns His good pleasure and eternal mercy.

I seek forgiveness from Allah the Most High for any mistake or error made in the execution of this task,

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beseeking Him for His pardon; praying for the guidance of those who may hear it and choose, by the will of God, to follow the noble Messenger.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may He send His choicest salutations and peace on the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad, and upon his Family and Companions together, *Amin*.

YUSUF ISLAM 1416H/1995CE

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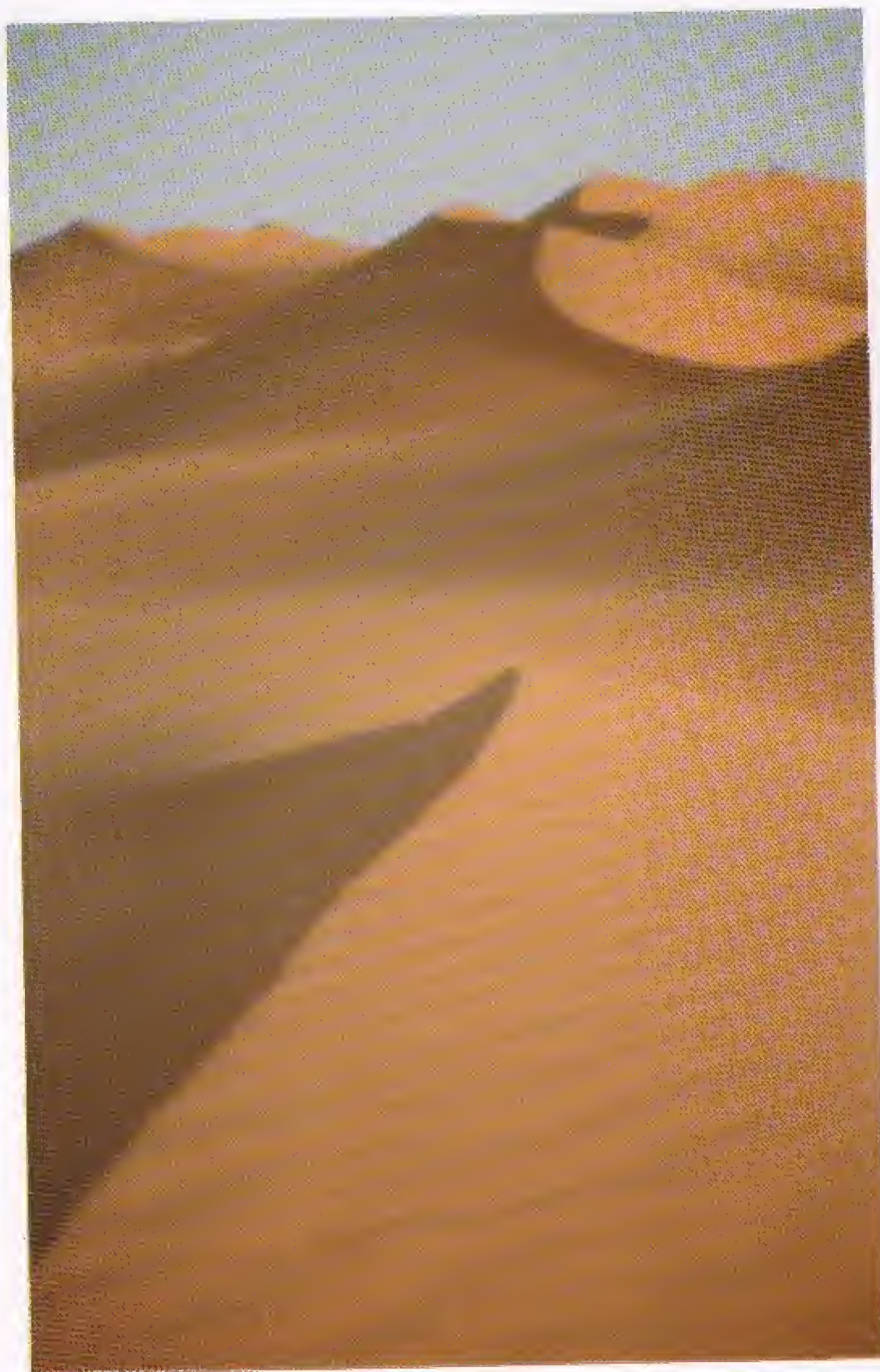
Peter Sanders; Tony Stone Images.

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The Call to Prayer

﴿ Allāhu ﴾
akbar! Allāhu akbar!
Allāhu akbar! Allāhu akbar!
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa Allāh. Ashhadu
an lā ilāha illa Allāh. Ashhadu anna
Muhammadan Rasūlu Allāh. Ashhadu anna
Muhammadan Rasūlu Allāh. Hayya 'ala al-salāh.
Hayya 'ala al-salāh. Hayya 'ala al-falāh. Hayya 'ala al-
falāh. Allāhu akbar! Allāhu akbar! Lā ilāha illa Allāh.
Allah is Most Great! Allah is Most Great! Allah is Most
Great! Allah is Most Great! I bear witness that there is
no god but Allah. I bear witness that there is no god
but Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad is the
messenger of Allah. I bear witness that Muhammad
is the messenger of Allah. Come to prayer.
Come to prayer. Come to success. Come to
success. Allah is Most Great! Allah is
Most Great! There is no god but
﴿ Allah. ﴾



Early Life

MUHAMMAD, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*,² peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was a mercy to the universe. His life ever shines as a symbol of light and guidance for all time and for all people. He was the last Messenger of God to humanity, the Seal of the Prophets. To the oneness of God he called – *Lā ilāha illa Allāh, Muḥammadun Rasūlu Allāh*: there is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. This is the life and message of Islam.

Muhammad, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, the Last Prophet, was born in the harsh desert land of Arabia almost 600 years after Jesus, peace be upon him, in the city of Makkah, located in a deep valley surrounded by a curtain of brown and black jagged mountains.

Muhammad, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, was an orphan. His father had died before he was born. So he was raised and weaned in the desert according to Arab custom. By the tender age of six, his mother Aminah also died and he was left all alone to be brought up by his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muttalib and later under the care of his paternal uncle Abu Talib.

THE LONE
ORPHAN

‘I QRA’ bismi Rabbika al-ladhī khalaq •
 Khalaqa al-insāna min ‘alaq • ‘Iqra’ wa
 Rabbuka al-Akram • Al-ladhī ‘allama bi-
 al-qalam • ‘Allama al-insāna mā lam ya‘lam •

READ! IN THE NAME OF YOUR LORD WHO
 CREATES • CREATES MAN FROM A CLOT OF
 BLOOD • READ! AND YOUR LORD IS MOST
 GENEROUS • WHO TEACHES BY THE PEN •
 TEACHES MAN THAT WHICH HE KNEW NOT • 8

These were the first five jewelled verses of the Glorious Qur’an. The voice was that of Angel Gabriel, the Spirit of Faith and Truth, who had been sent to the last of God’s Prophets. The mission had just begun for Muhammad, *salla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, the Messenger of Allah – a mercy to the worlds.

The Prophet Muhammad, *salla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, had just received the first words from his Lord on Mount Hira. He rushed down from the mountain, his face shining with beads of sweat, heart beating fiercely. The verses of the Qur’an were still echoing in his soul. What kind of visitation was this, what kind of words? He ran to Khadijah, “Cover me! Cover me!” She gently comforted him as he explained what had just happened. “I fear that something may befall me,” he said. “Never! By Allah,” said his wife faithfully.

“Allah would never disgrace you. You keep good relations with all your relatives, you help the poor and the needy, you serve your guests generously and assist the deserving unfortunate ones.”⁹

Some time later Khadijah took him to her cousin, a learned scribe named Waraqah, who knew the Torah and the Gospel well. After describing to him what had happened that night, the old man, without hesitation, affirmed that indeed this must have been a meeting with Archangel Gabriel, whom Allah had sent to Moses. “I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people turn you out,” the old wise man said.¹⁰ He knew that the Prophet foretold in the earlier Scriptures had arrived. So began the call of the Last Prophet, *salla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, which was to influence the world forevermore and herald a new age in the history of human consciousness and progress; the birth of Islam.

The first to believe in the Prophet, *salla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, was his wife Khadijah, followed shortly after by his young beloved cousin ‘Ali, son of Abu Talib, who lived with them. Most were violently opposed but some willingly opened their hearts and accepted the call, like Muhammad’s closest friend and companion, Abu Bakr and his servant Zayd and others.

After a while, as the revelations of the Qur’an continued, the Prophet, *salla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, was



Migration

MUHAMMAD, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, had soared to the zenith of Divine heights. It was in this night of supreme spiritual and bodily elevation that he received from Allah Almighty the second noble pillar of Islam: the five daily prayers, and that which was given to no Prophet ever before – the whole world was made as a place of prostration and prayer for Muslims. This was *al-Isra’ wa al-Mi’raj*, the Night Journey and Ascension.²⁵

On his return, the next morning, after hearing about this miraculous journey, the disbelievers now rejoiced in the opportunity to jeer and mock at Muhammad, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, even more. They had called him a madman, a soothsayer, a poet and now a liar. Persecution increased and life grew unbearable for the Prophet, *ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, and his companions. They were constantly in danger and so they quietly prepared to leave Makkah.

A delegation of those who had embraced Islam from the city of Yathrib, two hundred and fifty miles away, offered their homes and welcomed all Muslims to live in the safety of their city. They especially

AL-MADINA

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FAITH

'Faith consists of more than sixty odd branches; and Haya' (modesty) is a branch of faith.'⁵⁰

KNOWLEDGE

'Men are mines, like mines of gold and silver, the best of them in the days of ignorance are the best of them in Islam when they have understood (the religion).'⁵¹

REMEMBRANCE

'The example of the one who remembers his Lord (Allah) in comparison with the one who does not remember his Lord is that of the living and the dead.'⁵²

PRAYER

'If there was a river at the door of anyone of you and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you say there could remain any dirt on him?' They said, 'Not a trace of dirt would be left.' The Prophet ﷺ added, 'That is the example of the five prayers with which Allah annuls evil deeds.'⁵³

EARNINGS

'Nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands.'⁵⁴

SPENDING

'Allah the Most High said: Spend o son of Adam and (I) shall spend on you.'⁵⁵

Sayings of the Prophet ﷺ

MARRIAGE

'When a man marries, he has fulfilled half of the religion; so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half.'⁵⁶

CONDUCT

'Certainly the most perfect of believers in faith is one who is best of them in conduct and most affable to his family.'⁵⁷

PARENTS

'Let his nose be rubbed in the dust, let his nose be rubbed in the dust!' It was said, 'O Messenger of Allah, who is he?' 'He who sees either of his parents during their old age or both of them, but he does not enter Paradise.'⁵⁸

JUDGING

'A ruler should not judge between two persons while he is angry.'⁵⁹

VISITING THE SICK

'Verily, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, will say on the Day of Resurrection: O son of Adam, I was sick but you did not visit Me. He will say: O my Lord, how could I visit Thee when thou art the Lord of the worlds? Thereupon He will say: Didn't you know that a certain servant of Mine was sick but you did not visit him, and were you not aware that if you had visited him, you would have found Me by him.'⁶⁰

GENTLENESS

'He who is deprived of gentleness is deprived of good.'⁶¹